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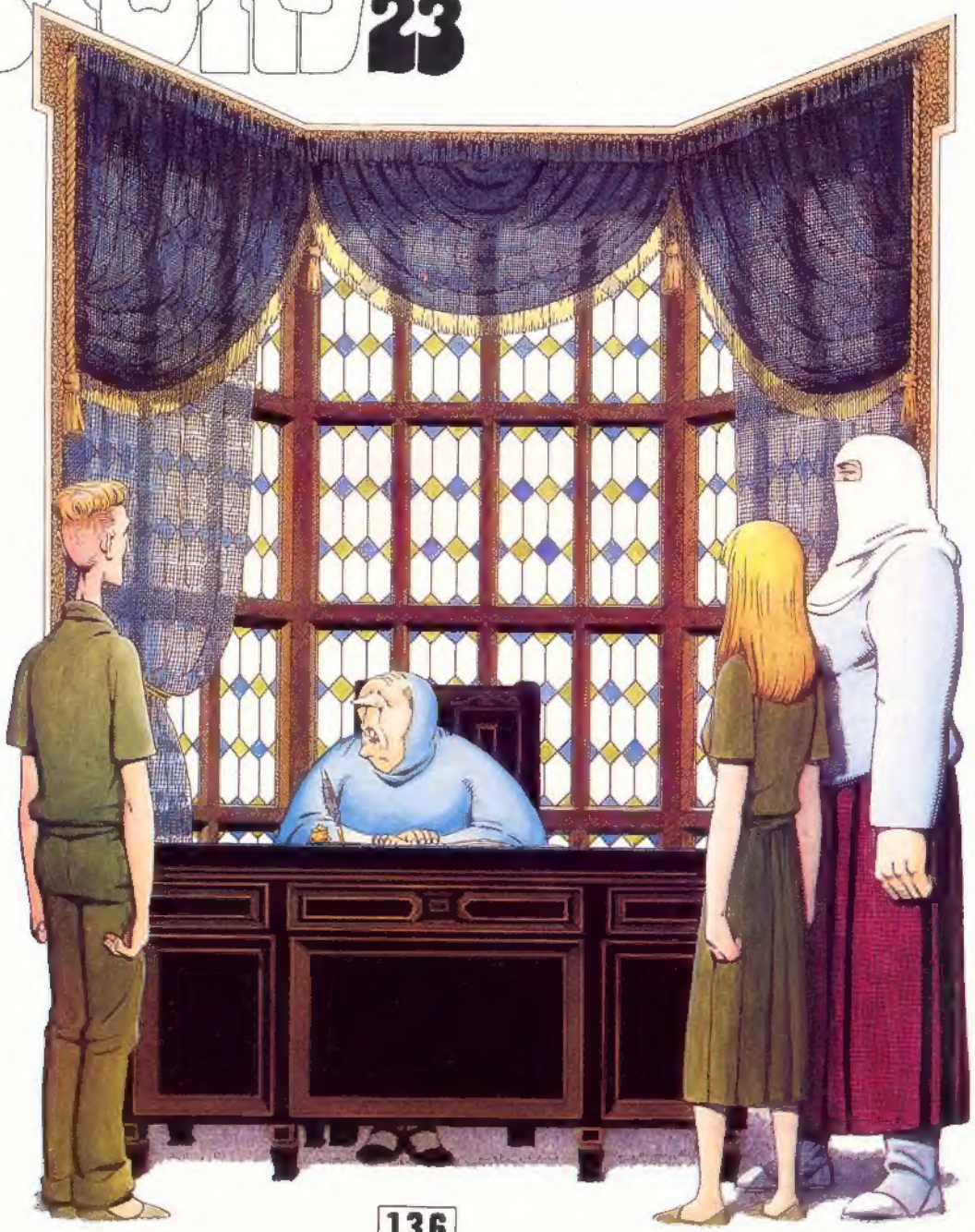
CEREBUS

JAKA'S STORY

23



136
JUL

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Kevin Eastman is up to see us this week (June 18 to 21) for a long-delayed visit. Even as I write this he's in the library of the Off-White House working on pages from his (and Eric Talbot's) *Melting Pot* project. Since we're in the middle of producing this final issue of *Jaka's Story*, I'm sure Ger and I must seem a little more stunned and frazzled than usual. It was good timing, though, because I had a number of questions about Tundra (Kevin's new business entity) in view of my having promised you-all a Cerebus Preview of Rick Veitch's *Bratpack*; recent ads for which have included the line "A Tundra Production". Since the Preview is only intended for creator-owned, self-published material, I was compelled to be more than politely curious about the nature of Tundra. If Tundra was a new publishing company then we could have to decline to preview *Bratpack* and I would explain the reason here in this space.

Without getting into the gory details of Rick's relationship with Tundra (which is none of *any* of our businesses) Kevin did reassure me that a) the deal began as a verbal/handshake agreement and would have continued as such if Rick hadn't expressed a preference for a written contract b) all of Rick's rights under the Creator's Bill of Rights are preserved intact c) the book will be solicited by Rick's King Hell Press and cheques paying for *Bratpack* issues will be payable to King Hell and not Tundra d) Rick has the final say on all elements of production, distribution, licensing and/or merchandising of *Bratpack*.

Tundra is assisting many of medium's best talents to get their UNEDITED work to their audience. If the creator *wants* a contract or *wants* to function in an employer-employee relationship that is an option and a number of projects are moving ahead on that basis. I shake my head warily but, alas, that *too* is freedom. As the preamble to the Bill of Rights states "no single type of agreement between creator and publisher can or should be instituted." A lot of guys really don't want to have anything to do with the business side of things. I see this as potentially *very* unhealthy for the creators involved but, fortunately, all I have to be concerned with is Rick and Rick has absolute control of King Hell and *Bratpack* business-wise and creatively.

The *other* side of Tundra; financial assistance to self-publishers; whether making up a short-fall on a phone bill; being willing to advance short-term loans to cover printing bills when the distributors (AHEM) don't pay on time; providing in-house production facilities at cost; keeping quality material in-print and available to shops; these (of course) I applaud wholeheartedly.

The third side; access to other sources of income tailored to each creator's preferences and idiosyncracies (toys and figures and a movie deal for this one; movie deal and figures for that one; movie deal no toys no figures for someone else; you get the idea) obviously leaves *me* cold (Ger, too), but there is no question that they represent opportunities for many creators who *do* like that kind of thing to build their own environment and (we hope) to become autonomous, self-sustaining creative forces who can then lend assistance, themselves, to the next generation of cartoonists.

So far, so good. A *Bratpack* preview (with Mr. Rick Veitch's kind indulgence) will appear in a future issue.

Tundra, I hasten to add is NOT, repeat *NOT* looking for submissions.

****

Oh and 'A Tundra Production' will be replaced with 'in association with Tundra' Kevin informs me. More whole-hearted applause.

CEREBUS
NO. 136 JULY 1990

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

MONIQUE KAPTEIN
Administrative Assistant

JAKA'S STORY
a novel

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PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 114)

•

POGROM'S PROGRESS
(Cerebus 115 to Cerebus 119)

•

THE POET
(Cerebus 120 to Cerebus 130)

•

MYSTERY ACHIEVEMENT
(Cerebus 131 to Cerebus 136)

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SHE TURNED AWAY slowly, slowly as if in a dream; slowly; her very being a fixed point in the starry firmament of the Office of the Grandlord; slowly; her eyes closing to block out the terrible sight; still, slowly; so that those faces yet loomed before her mind's eye; slowly; each face a portrait etched in amusement; slowly; her ears scorched a fiery crimson by the roar of laughter; slowly; as if the air itself had become tangible and resistant to movement; slowly.

Had Lord Julius thought of the fragile and delicate flower which *is* the heart of any twelve-year-old child; *had* he realized that the well-intentioned advice of a very earnest little girl for her beloved uncle had little in common with the intrigues and conspiracies of those *courtiers* who surrounded him each waking moment of his life; *had* he considered what grievous harm might be done to his niece by his Mocking of a wife no longer trusted and no longer loved . . .

Had Jaka been able to see that the incident (as she would refer to it) marked the first sign of the imminent dissolution of Lord Julius' marriage; *had* she recognized the extent to which the party (held, as it was, on *Jaka's* birthday and *not* Astoria's) signalled her emergence into the rarefied and glittering world of Palnan society; *had* she shared her uncle's sublime sense of the ridiculousness of all people and things (and none moreso than himself) . . .

Instead, she turned, turned from the scene of her humiliation; turned and fled, her legs feeling distant and heavy; seeking escape from the vortex of rising hilarity which hurled her outward and away even as it sought, seemingly, simultaneously to ensnare her.

WHEN, AGAIN, SHE became aware of herself and her surroundings, she stood on a worn and rain-dampened dock, shivering, attired in a simple shift, a pair of old bedroom slippers and one of Nurse's worn and shabby winter coats of coarse and nappy fur. In her right hand she clutched a paper bag which contained a half-dozen blouses (nearly identical in pattern and colour as subsequent examination would reveal) as well as her own, dear Missy, mute and forlorn.

"I said these rings will do, Miss. You can go aboard any time."

The voice startled her and she considered several responses, her mouth opening and closing fractionally. At last, she nodded, merely, and made her way, hesitatingly, up the gang-plank. She paused at the ship's railing and looked uncertainly about her, eyes wide, her vision obscured by stray wisps of her hair.

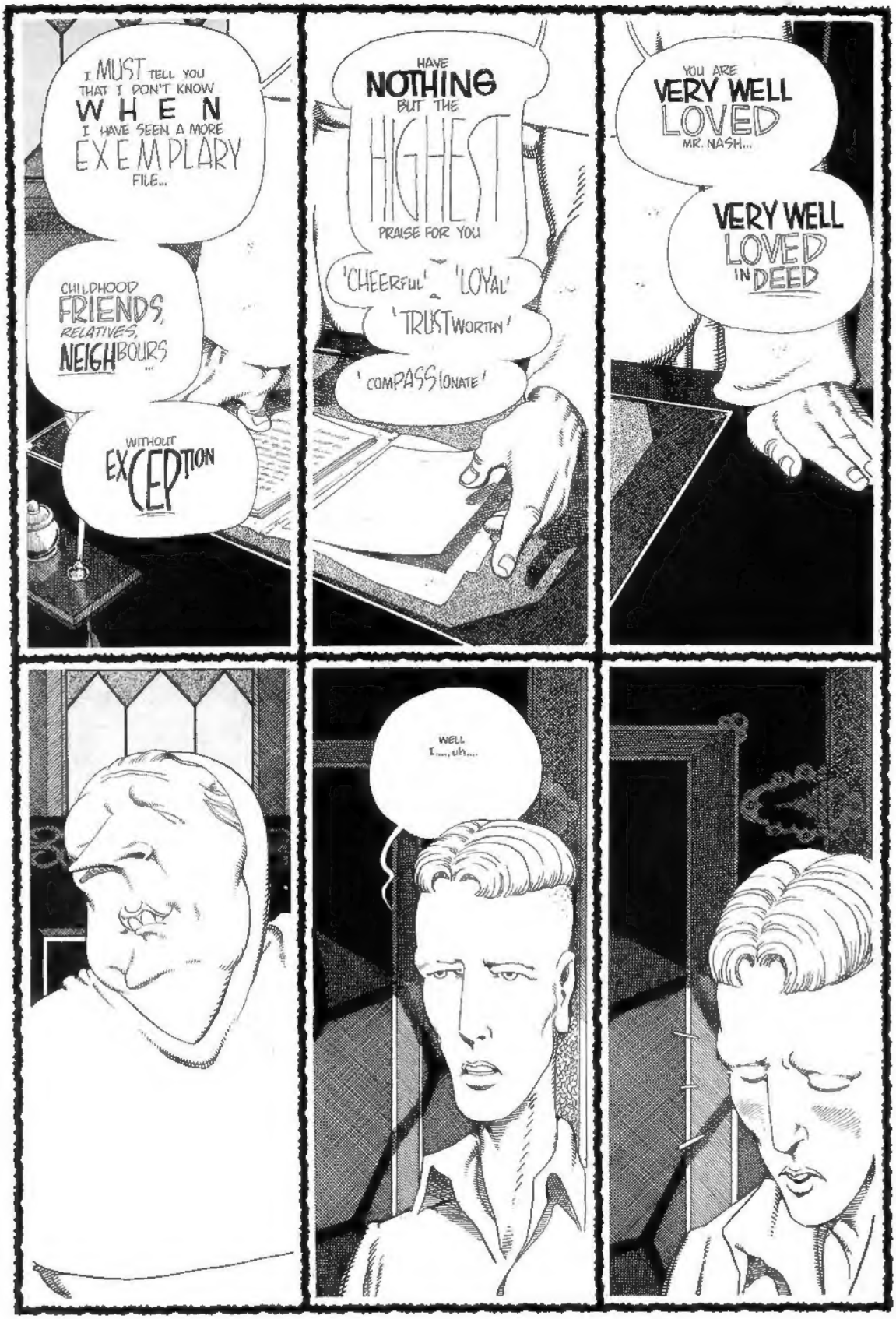
"Door straight ahead, Miss."

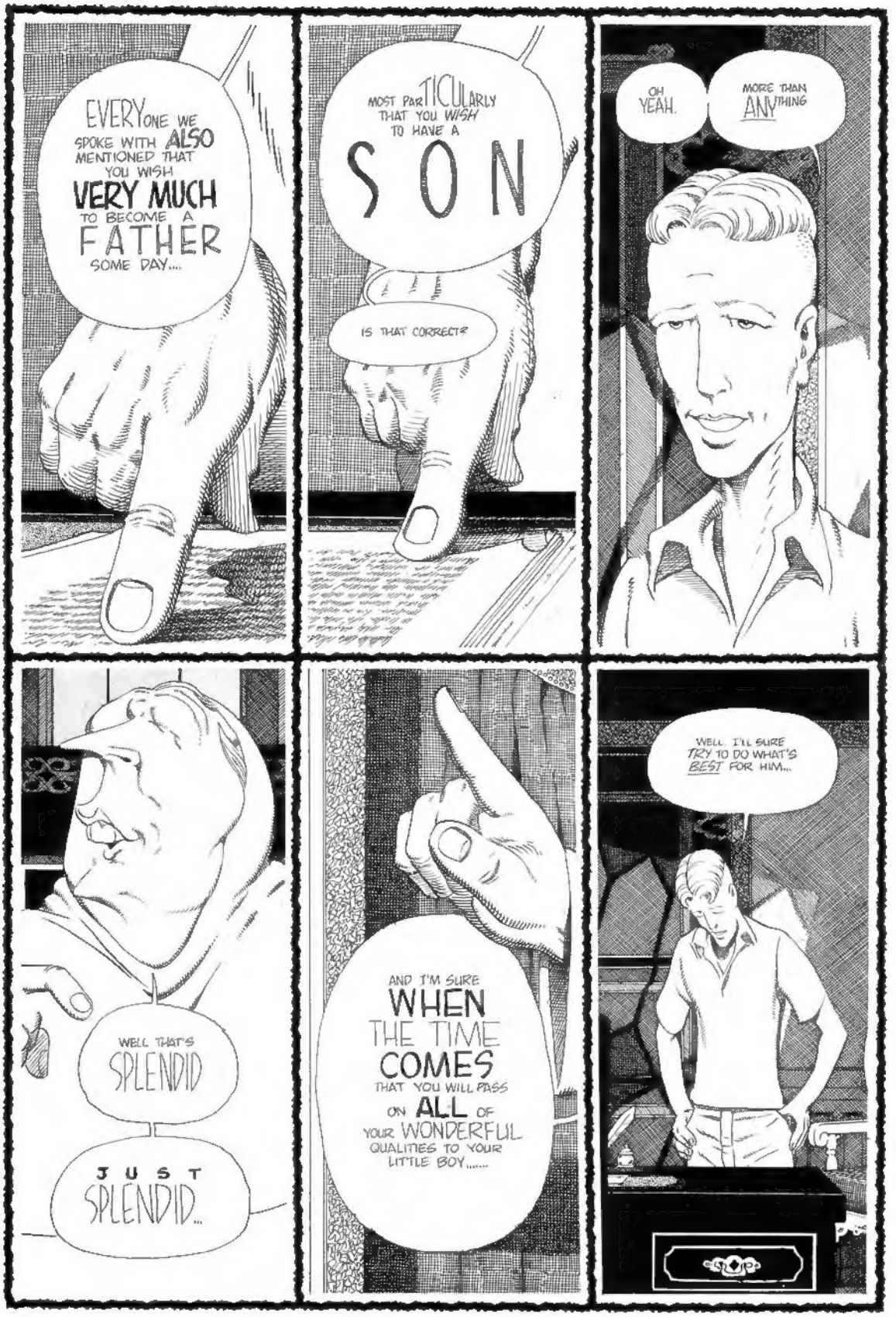
The voice came from behind her; though whether yards or miles distant she could not have said. With a tentative, shuffling gait, she moved to and then through a narrow hatchway, emerging into a small, cell-like cabin of white, painted wood, containing a single narrow bunk, covered by a gray woolen blanket on which were stencilled the words "Merchant of Iest."

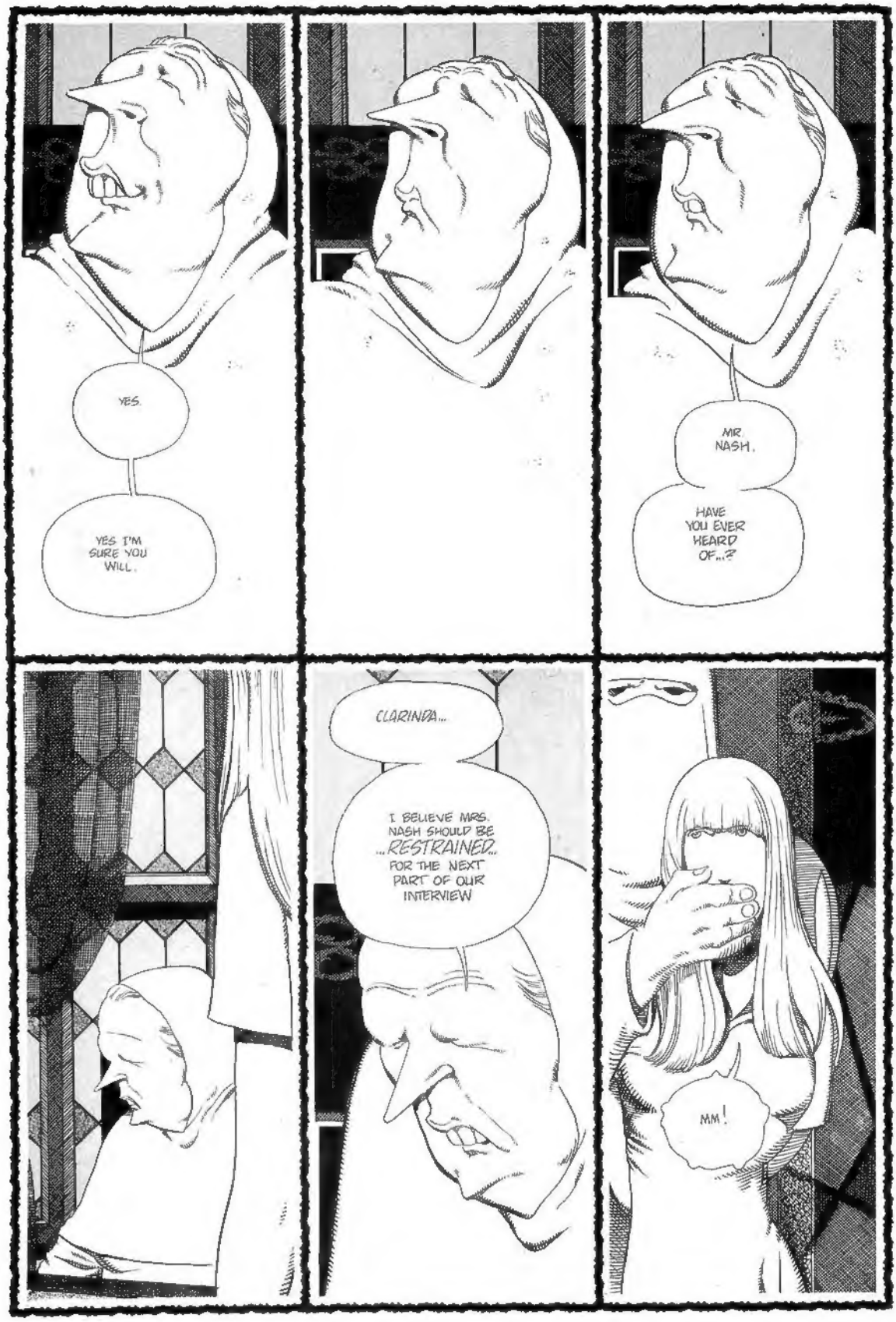
Jaka lay down, then. She removed Missy from the paper bag and clutched her oldest and dearest friend tightly across her breasts, elbows locked tightly and knees drawn up to her chest in a fierce and anxious bear-hug. Her hair hung before her face, blocking much of the diffuse light which streamed through a porthole above her. In a very few minutes, her few, random thoughts had fled and she heard and smelled and tasted and saw and felt nothing as Blackness; terrible, calm, resolute, eternal; claimed her for its own, once more.

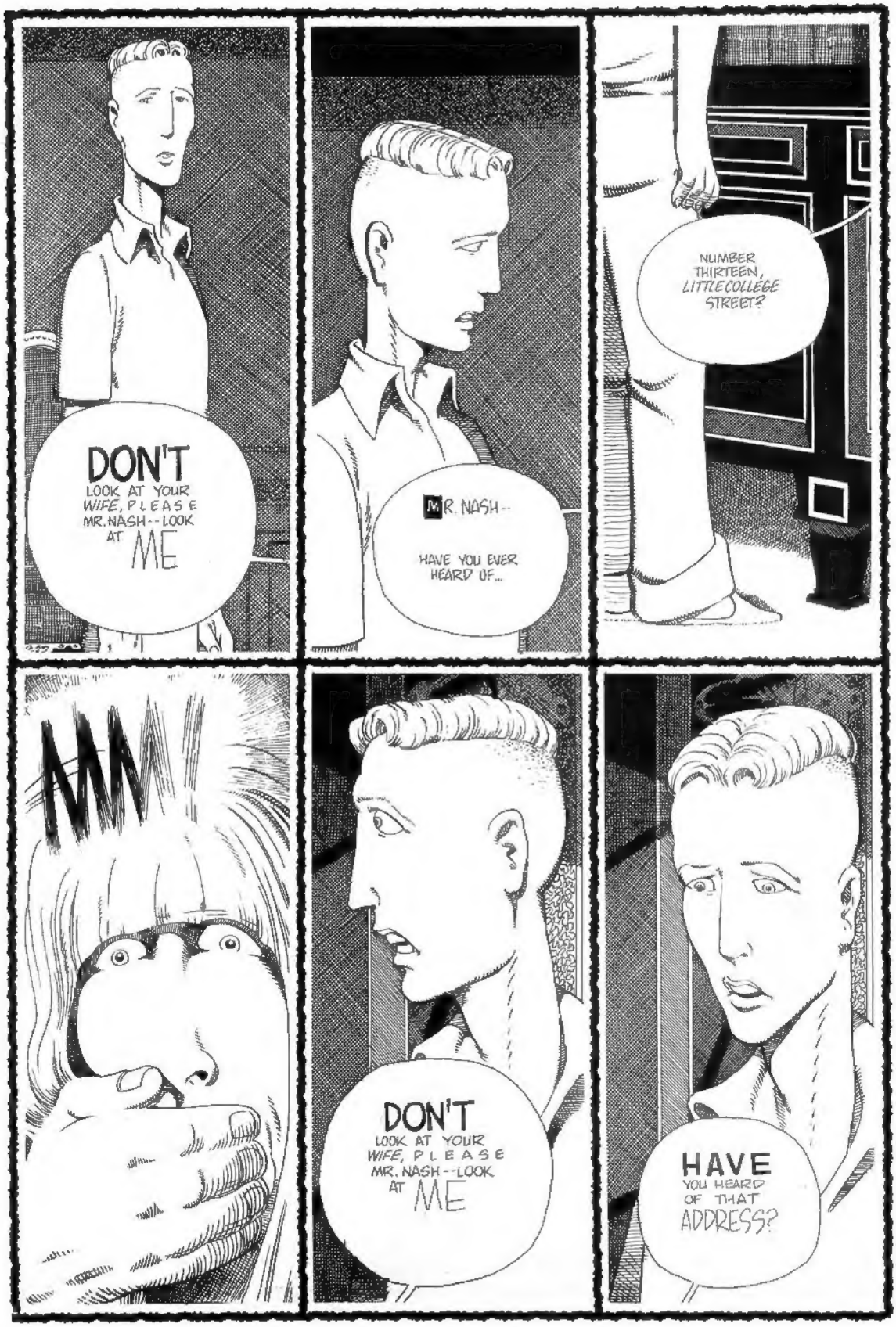
"The Merchant of Iest" pushed back from its mooring, swinging smoothly out into the Bay of Sunshee. Within the hour it was speeding northward towards its ancient city-state of origin, a brisk, cold wind filling its sails.

GOOD MORNING, MR. NASH
GOOD MORNING, MRS. THATCHER
GOOD MORNING MRS. NASH
GOOD MORNING MRS. THATCHER
MISTER NASH...
FLIP

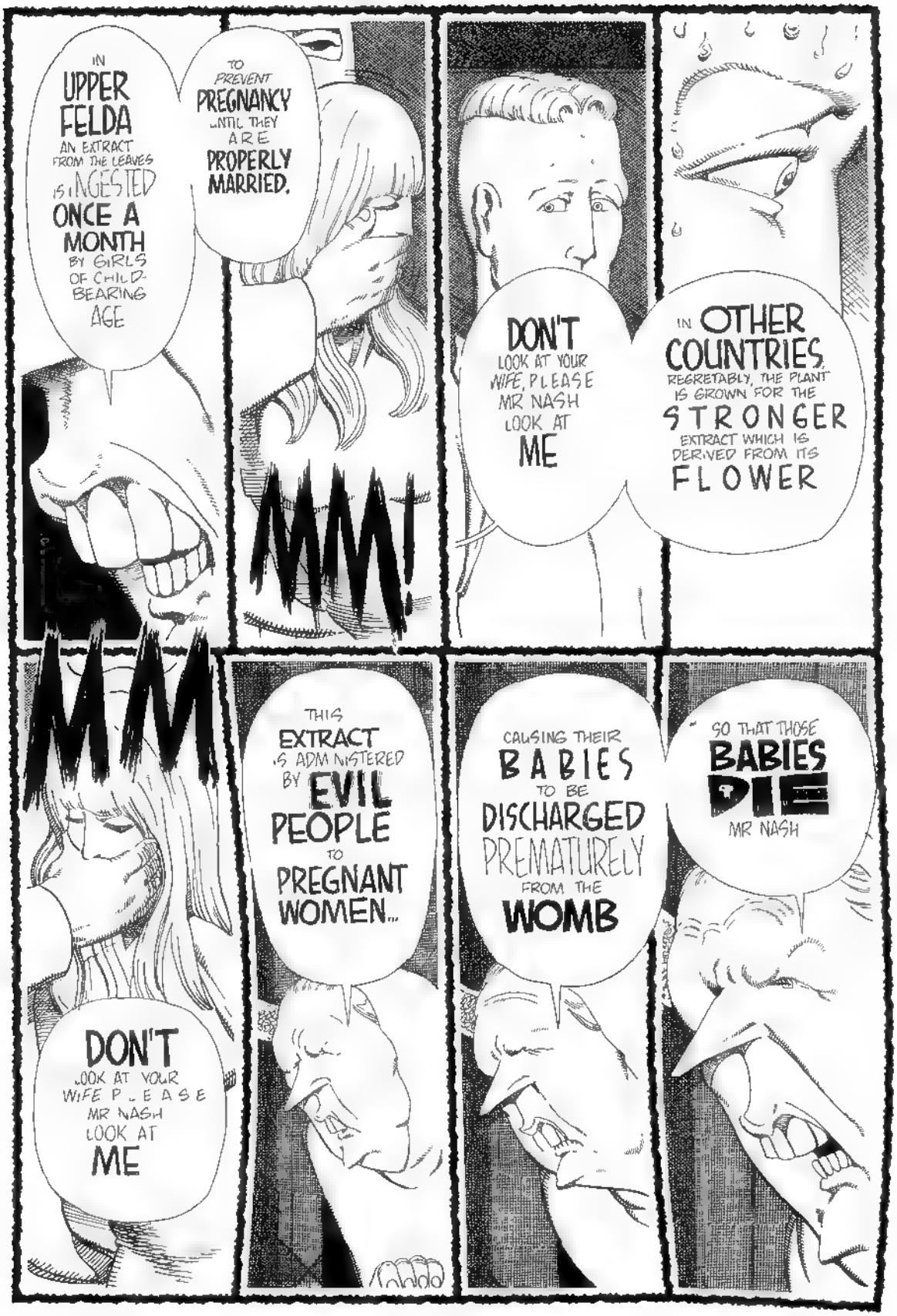

I MUST TELL YOU THAT I DON'T KNOW WHEN I HAVE SEEN A MORE EXEMPLARY FILE...
CHILDHOOD FRIENDS, RELATIVES, NEIGHBOURS...
WITHOUT EXCEPTION
HAVE NOTHING BUT THE HIGHEST PRAISE FOR YOU
'CHEERFUL' 'LOYAL'
'TRUSTWORTHY'
'COMPASSIONATE'
YOU ARE VERY WELL LOVED MR. NASH...
VERY WELL LOVED IN DEED
WELL I...., UH....

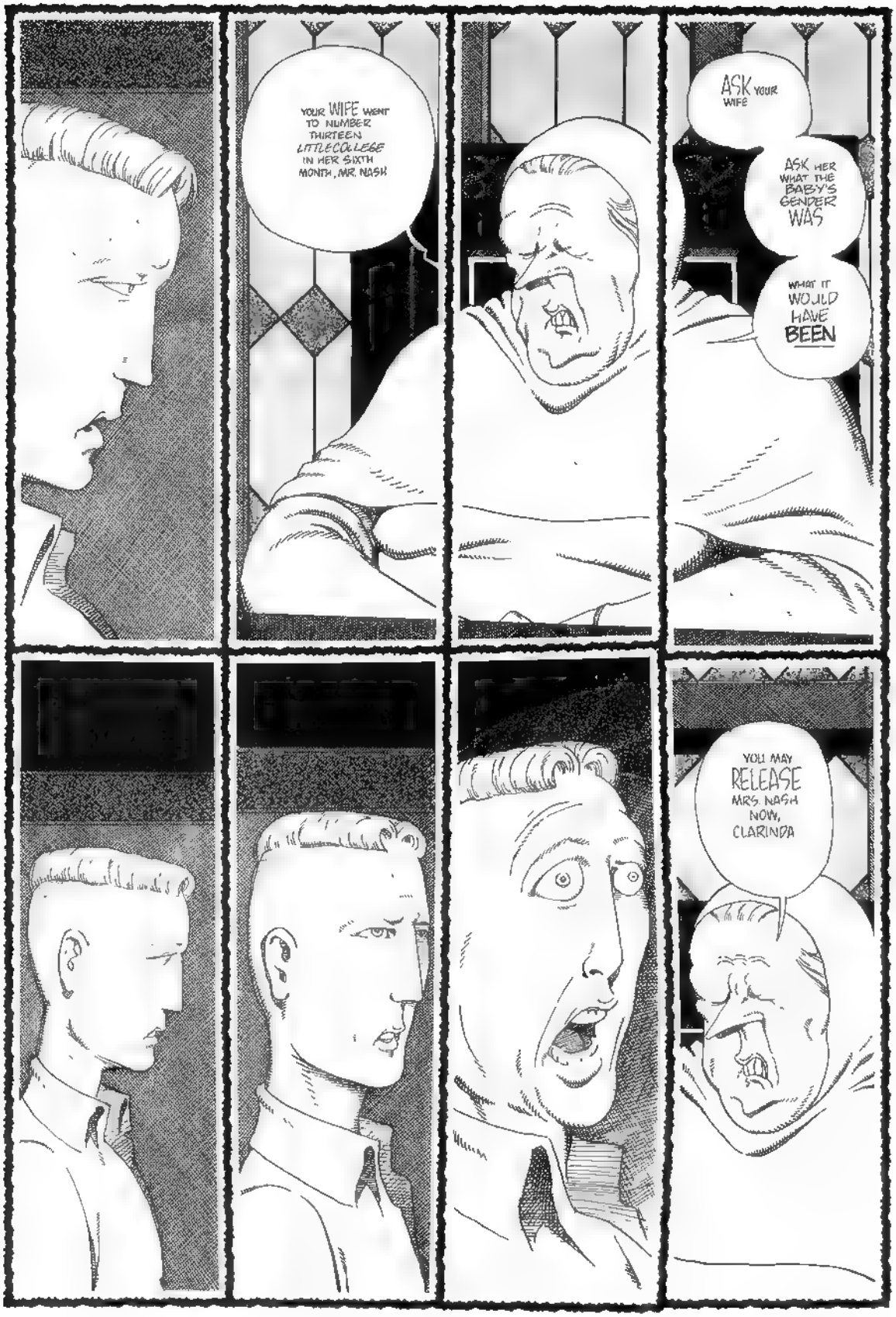

EVERYone WE SPOKE WITH ALSO MENTIONED THAT YOU WISH VERY MUCH TO BECOME A FATHER SOME DAY...
MOST PARTICULARLY THAT YOU WISH TO HAVE A SON
IS THAT CORRECT?
OH YEAH.
MORE THAN ANYTHING
WELL THAT'S SPLENDID
JUST SPLENDID...
AND I'M SURE WHEN THE TIME COMES THAT YOU WILL PASS ON ALL OF YOUR WONDERFUL QUALITIES TO YOUR LITTLE BOY.....
WELL. I'LL SURE TRY TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR HIM...


YES.
YES I'M SURE YOU WILL.
MR. NASH.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF...?
CLARINDA...
I BELIEVE MRS. NASH SHOULD BE ...RESTRAINED... FOR THE NEXT PART OF OUR INTERVIEW
MM!


DON'T LOOK AT YOUR WIFE, PLEASE MR. NASH--LOOK AT ME
MR. NASH--
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF...
NUMBER THIRTEEN, LITTLE COLLEGE STREET?
MM
DON'T LOOK AT YOUR WIFE, PLEASE MR. NASH--LOOK AT ME
HAVE YOU HEARD OF THAT ADDRESS?

NO
I-- I KNOW WHERE LITTLECOLLEGE STREET IS
THIS IS A PARTICULAR HOUSE IN LITTLECOLLEGE STREET...
WHOSE GARDEN UNTIL RECENTLY...
WAS GIVEN OVER TO THE CULTIVATION OF POMANAY PLANTS
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THOSE PLANTS, MR. NASH?
MM!
NO
I uh
DON'T LOOK AT YOUR WIFE, PLEASE MR. NASH-- LOOK AT ME
THE POMANAY PLANT WAS BRED AND DEVELOPED BY OUR BLESSED MOTHER CIRIN
OVER MANY, MANY YEARS


IN UPPER FELDA AN EXTRACT FROM THE LEAVES IS INGESTED ONCE A MONTH BY GIRLS OF CHILD-BEARING AGE
TO PREVENT PREGNANCY UNTIL THEY ARE PROPERLY MARRIED.
MM!
DON'T LOOK AT YOUR WIFE, PLEASE MR NASH LOOK AT ME
IN OTHER COUNTRIES, REGRETABLY, THE PLANT IS GROWN FOR THE STRONGER EXTRACT WHICH IS DERIVED FROM ITS FLOWER
MM
DON'T LOOK AT YOUR WIFE PLEASE MR NASH LOOK AT ME
THIS EXTRACT IS ADMINISTERED BY EVIL PEOPLE TO PREGNANT WOMEN...
CAUSING THEIR BABIES TO BE DISCHARGED PREMATURELY FROM THE WOMB
SO THAT THOSE BABIES DIE MR NASH

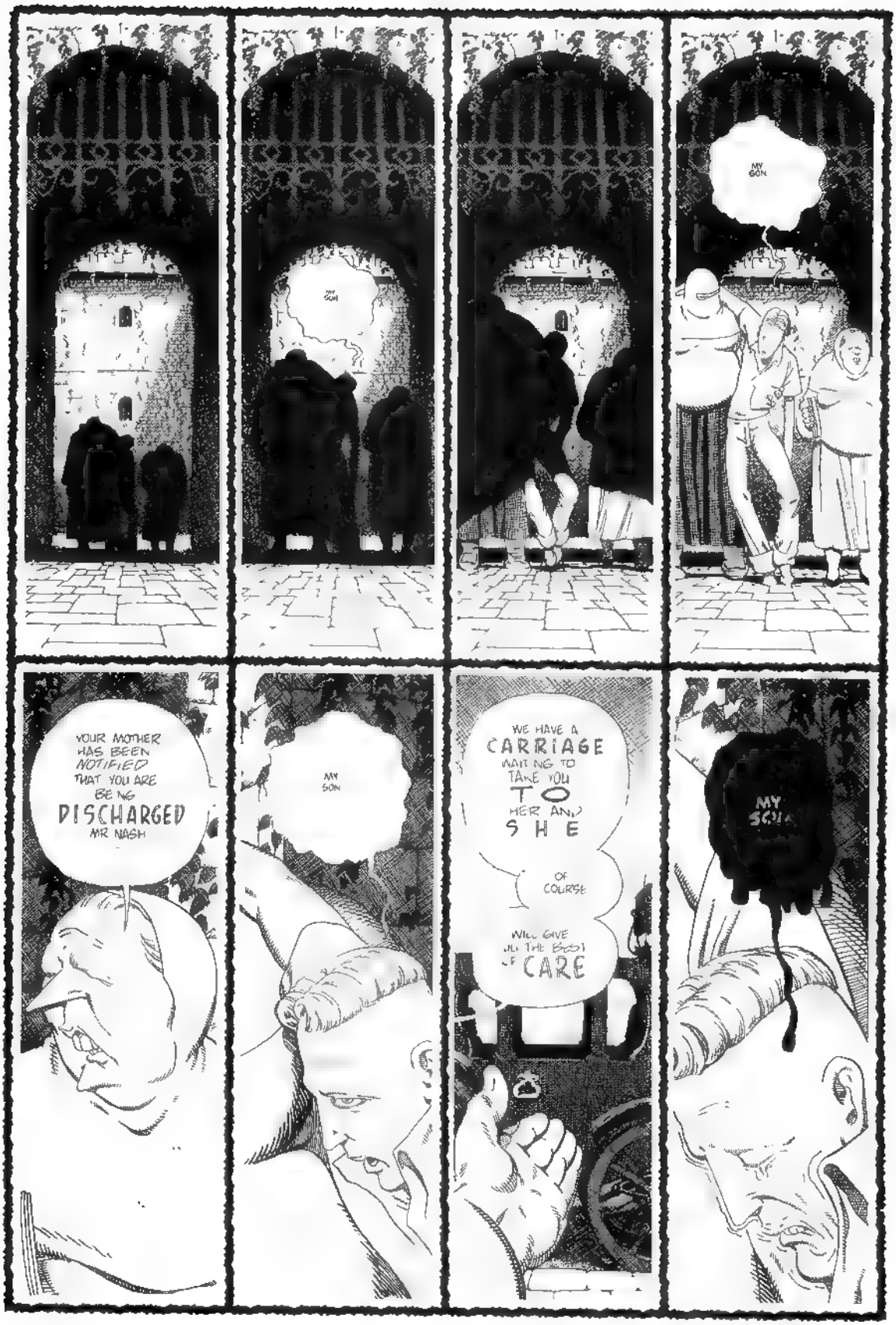

YOUR WIFE WENT TO NUMBER THIRTEEN LITTLECOLLEGE IN HER SIXTH MONTH, MR. NASH
ASK YOUR WIFE
ASK HER WHAT THE BABY'S GENDER WAS
WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN
YOU MAY RELEASE MRS NASH NOW, CLARINDA

RRICK?
RICK
S SWEETIE?
YOU
KILLED
MUH

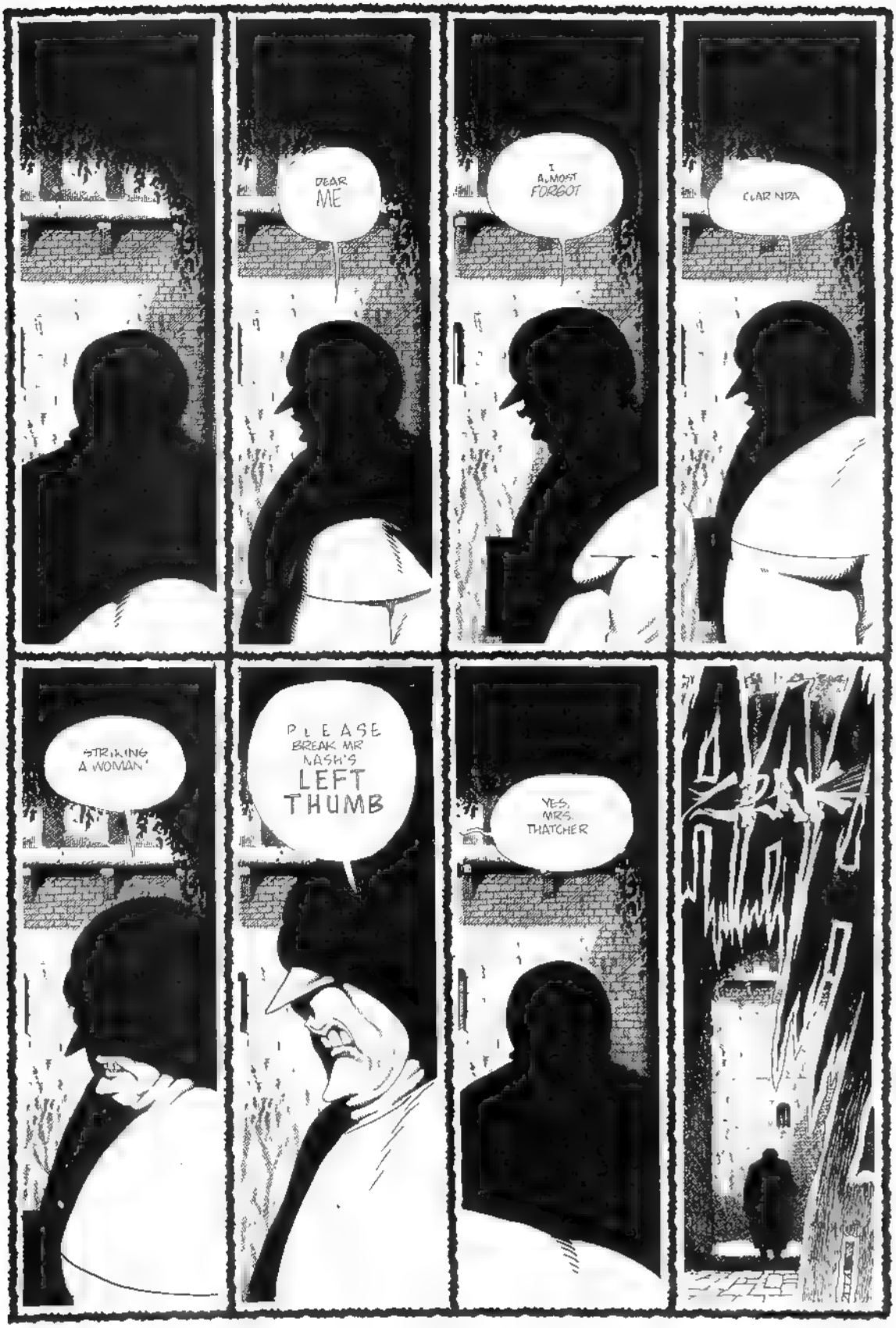
MY SON
CRAK
CLARINDA! RESTRAIN MR NASH

HE'S DEAD MY SON IS DEAD DEAD
MISTER NASH
DO YOU WISH TO GO TO PALNU WITH-YOUR -WIFE?

NO!
I NEVER WANT TO SEE HER AGAIN EVER
I HATE HER
I HATE HER
I HATE HER
VERY WISE
COME THIS WAY, THEN, MR NASH
CLARINDA? DO GIVE MR NASH SOME ASSISTANCE THERE, WON'T YOU?
MISS TAVERS THERE'S A DELEGATION FROM PALNU IN THE NEXT ROOM
THEY WILL SEE TO YOU I'M SURE


MY SON
MY SON
MY SON
YOUR MOTHER HAS BEEN NOTIFIED THAT YOU ARE BEING DISCHARGED MR NASH
MY SON
WE HAVE A CARRIAGE WAITING TO TAKE YOU TO HER AND SHE
OF COURSE
WILL GIVE YOU THE BEST OF CARE
MY SON

I KNOW THINGS SEEM VERY BLEAK RIGHT NOW, BUT IT IS ALL FOR THE BEST
ISN'T IT
IN TIME THE DEEP PAIN SHE HAS CAUSED YOU WILL HEAL
AND YOU WILL MARRY SOMEONE WHO WILL BEAR YOU THE SON YOU SO DESIRE
AND SHE WILL BE GOOD FOR YOU...
AND GOOD FOR YOUR SON AS WELL
M-M-2
THAT IS RIGHT
HURRY ALONG NOW DEAR
YOUR MOTHER'S VERY WORRIED ABOUT YOU I'M SURE


DEAR ME
I ALMOST FORGOT
CLAIR NIZA
STRIKING A WOMAN'
PLEASE BREAK MR NASH'S LEFT THUMB
YES, MRS. THATCHER

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dave -

I'm afraid you've got a real problem. I mean the letter column, of course. There's got to be an end to this kind of shit. I knew it had gone too far when I read the column in 131 and found 2 letters complaining about the idiocy of other letter-writers which contained many, if not most of the elements that make the column so irritating. There are at least a few of us who feel this way. There must be more.

For the record: I don't give a fuck what kind of music these morons are listening to before, after, or during the act of letter writing or any other act, for that matter. I don't give a fuck what the state of their love-lives are. I don't give even a hoot how many or what kind of drugs they take. I'm not interested in their chaotic ramblings. I don't care if they can come up with silly pseudonyms.

The column reeks, Dave. It's your fault, in part, for saying that you'd personally answer your mail. That's the point. These are personal letters to you. The writers can be excused. I'm sure I'd write something more closely approximating that style if it was a personal letter. But I don't need or want to read these things. I would much prefer another preview or some sketch-book pages or even an ad (say, for C&S II? When the fuck are you gonna rerelease that?) to the drivel we're getting now. I miss the comments on the story and the occasional truly funny whacked-out letter (like Hazel Motes in 104. I show that to everyone). The only recent letter with any entertainment value was the one on chinless guys.

Sorry to sound as if I've got a stick up my ass, but I used to really enjoy the column. You understand don't you?

Sincerely,

Eric Hamlin
141 Kane St #1
Brooklyn, NY
USA 11231

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Just got done watching David Lynch's "Twin Peaks" show on TV. Almost enough to restore my faith in television. Almost.

Does "Downtown Julie Brown" make you want to break out in hives and cower under the bed scratching yourself? Boy, me too.

I was going to write something about the recent stunning events in Cerebus, but I've been reflecting on the death and dungeon scenes for over a month now and I'm still too upset to form a coherent letter. Regarding Cerebus, that is. Oh, by the way, did they actually kill Oscar? It wasn't clear to me.

America has such a bad drug problem and after a recent discussion in my government class I know why. We were talking about whether or not drug testing should be mandatory in sensitive positions. I claimed the point was moot and a waste of funds to boot. Every venue that people can agree to spend money on is pointless. We've already spent so much money improving law-enforcement and arrests, etc, throwing the drug users into jail for 90 days and then letting them go again. At the same time, people are being turned away from the clinics and over half of all cocaine addicts say they'd like to get off it. Maybe it's time we stopped treating drug addicts as folks who need punishment and started treating them as people who need help. Fund clinics, not prisons.

Nobody in class agreed.

The other idea, which was supported by a larger percentage of the class, was for the government to release all of the cocaine that it had confiscated, only release it laced with some form of poison in an attempt to "frighten" people away from using cocaine, killing those who wouldn't be deterred.

I almost walked out of class in disgust.

Jeremy "Powdernose" Bushnell
1120 Bristol Rd.
Warminster, PA
USA 18974

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I am sitting here reading *Jaka's Story* #18 and watching the Blackhawks kick the shit out of the Northstars in game 7. It is finally hitting home that this truly is Jaka's story. Cerebus has not even appeared since the next to last page of #11. That's over 6 months without the earth pig. Please don't make us wait too much longer. (Oh well, go ahead and torture us, we love it.)

Thanks for your most intriguing/disturbing story yet.

John Walker
6616 Woodland Rd.
Morningside, MD
USA 20746

P.S. 1990 is MXM in Roman numerals. Hmm . . .
MXM

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

You know what's really cool about Cerebus? It's bona-fide Canadian writing and nobody seems to mind.

I'll confess to not having read a lot of Canadian literature but I think it's not without reason, because the picture we get in school of Canadian literature is writing that above all else is out to prove that it's not American; it's C*A*N*A*D*I*A*N*. I mean, all the stories we got in school always had phrases like "When I was growing up in Montreal in the 30's" or something similar stuck in there just so we'd know that this happened in Canada. I know I'm generalizing a bit here, and I may just be pointing out the failing of my town's particular curriculum, but it's always seemed to me that Canadian literature had to prove itself uniquely Canadian, and so Canadians like me didn't want to read it because it's always so preoccupied with being Canadian. That's why Leacock is so great - "Guido the Gimlet of Ghent" or "Q! A Psychic Pstory of the Psupernatural" doesn't have anything to prove - nationally, at least. Actually, I kind of wonder why we even bother to make these distinctions at all, between English and American and Canadian writing and so on. If a piece of writing has something to say about the uniqueness of being a Canadian, fine, but labelling literature seems to me to generate all kinds of false expectations.

So we have Cerebus, writing that's just so universally cool that nobody even thinks to label it. It's what Canadian writing should be (and, more likely than not, considering my ignorance of Canadian literature, is). So I don't know. The stuff I've read was good, but it always seemed to have something to prove, which acted more to make me not bother with it than to actually decrease the pleasure in reading. Nowhere in Cerebus is CANADA stamped, all caps, except the address. We just read it and it's Canadian and it's cool.

Sincerely,

Stephen Notley
601-11027-87 Ave.
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2P9

P.S. Jesus, what if Quebec really separates? Brrr . . You're the only Canadian artistic personality I feel able to confide these anxieties to. Plus I know your address.

P.S.S. Is the Aardvark due back before the end of *Jaka's Story*? Nah, don't answer that.

★★★★★★★★★★

Hi Dave -

Apologies for the spiral paper. Apologies also for the pen and ink and semi-messy handwriting instead of laser-printing or whatever. I'm in the middle of an Advertising lecture, and bringing a computer to class is forbidden by the syllabus.

I was going to save the writing of this letter until issue 148, which will be my 100th consecutive issue, but the imminent end of Jaka's Story will more or less coincide with a major event in my life, and that's led me to think of all that's happened to me since I first picked up #48.

8 years ago, when I walked into the Book Tree in North Phoenix and plunked down my $1 50 for #48 I was 13, just past my Bar Mitzvah and scared stiff of high school. I remember showing the issue to friends, asking them what they thought. They hadn't a clue. Honestly, neither did I. But I was hooked anyway

And I remained hooked. When Cerebus split the Regency, I was touring the American West in a theater troupe. When Cerebus was writing his book at Michele's, I was getting pushed around in Phys. Ed. When Cerebus was getting pounded by Henrot Gutch, I was falling head-over-heels for the first time. When Cerebus was declared Pope, I was getting by on my driver's test and then having an accident two weeks later on the day of my prom. When Bear was trying to pull Cerebus out of the hotel wall, I was sending off applications to colleges.

Can you see what's coming?

Cerebus took liberties with Astoria, I got a D on my first college midterm. Cerebus grabbed hold as the tower spiralled up, I pondered a change of major Cerebus hung out with a carrot, I interned at a TV station in Phoenix. Cerebus walked on the moon, I went to work at a newspaper in Mesa, Arizona. Cerebus threw balls into a bucket with Rick, I sent letters across the country, looking for a job.

In three months, I will graduate from Northwestern. Where will Cerebus be? I don't know. But I'll be watching. And I'll keep watching until 300.

There aren't many people that have remained constant in my life these past 8 years. And there are fewer who I have counted as friends over that span But you, Dave, are right in there.

You and that little gray guy with the nose and ears.

We're all travelling together, man. Thanks for making the trip that much more enjoyable.

Your friend,

Adam Beechen
1835 Hinman Room 101
Evanston, IL
USA 60201

★★★★★★★★★★

Re: Issue 130

That's it, Dave? Eleven issues of Cerebus just to get to . . . a bad pun? That's horrid.

I gotta love ya, Dave.

Steve Koriagin
(no relation to my brother, Jon)
145 Canfield Ave. #5
Santa Cruz, CA
USA 95060

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave & Ger,

Y'know, this is the time of the semester when your grade is earned. All those things you thought were irrevelant or unimportant wind up as essay questions on the mid-term exam. Why did I think they were so unimportant? Probably, because I was trying to think of ways to begin a conversation with Sue

Yep, like Pud, when I finally got up enough balls to approach her I was interrupted. There she was - alone sipping her beer. Eye contact. A smile? Be cool, be cool! Start to walk over. Be cool! Take a drink before you say "Howdy!" (This always works!) Why do I feel so damp? Wow, I missed my mouth completely and dumped half of my beer down my front. I can feel her eyes follow me as I check myself out in the *FAR* corner. Wow, I really soaked myself, didn't I?

The disaster of that night haunted me till I found myself turning to Cerebus to take my mind off of my stupidity. This in turn made me draw doodles in class instead of trying to gawk at Sue.

The guy next door is blasting "Delicate Sound of Thunder" on CD. He's skipping from song to song in random order before they end. This would really piss me off but it's such good music.

So, here I am studying for Psychology 101, thinking about Sue. So I read #130. Cerebus got out of town just in time didn't he? I guess the nearest hardware store is a long walk away.

My roommate got a 3.84 last semester and is "trying for a 4.0 this time!" He studies from 8:00 a.m. till 11:00 p.m. NO JOKE! He only sees the light of day when he leaves for classes or eats or goes to National Guard.

He's like my conscience. He's always studying when I'm sleeping, hungover, or riding out a trip. He asked me once what I did all weekend while he was at Guard and I told him, "Well, I got stoned to the Bejezzus on Friday, called some chick a cunt and almost began a fight with a ZY brother (In the ZY house no less!), and then to calm down I took two drops of LSD-M on Saturday."

He looked at me as if I was Satan's spawn!

Y'know, that time I dropped, when I was peaked and waiting to get to sleep somewhere at 8:30 Sunday, I read *High Society, Church & State I and II* straight.

For the first time, it made sense.

So, here I am at crunch time, thinking what a waste of a semester this was. Thank God I had enough $ to continue my Cerebus fix. (Drugs you can usually scarf from fucked up friends).

I better return to my studies, I'd like to graduate someday and get a good job so Sue and I can live without many financial burdens. Thanks for listening and keep up the great work!

All the way to #300,

Phillip D'Beers
500 East 2nd St.
Bloomsburg, PA
USA 17815

P.S. That's not my real name, just a nickname. (At a party, the last one to finish drinking their beer is named Phillip - get it? "Fill up the beers"? I always lose.) Do you think I'd admit to doing those kind of drugs and then sign my name to it? I'm kinda paranoid about it, y'know?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

I am trying to resist . . . the temptation . . . of saying . . . that while reading . . . Cerebus #130 . . . I was, well . . . blown away.

Ugh. Damn. Sorry.

"No artistic license." That one got me thinking, about how hard it's becoming to express oneself in ways outside the norm without being harassed for it. You, Dave, accomplish something completely different in the comics medium and you get attacked, from Diamond Distributors to Robert E. Smith. The real Oscar got screwed just because of his flamboyant lifestyle (as well as his orientation). Eleven goddamn states are trying to get warning stickers on records (everyone

who has ever slashed their wrists did so because a song told them to, obviously). Then the government wants to destroy the first amendment by outlawing flagburning. Look, when one has pride for one's country, it's carried in the heart, not on top of a goddamn pole. These people have to get over it. And hey, if these people took shits and the only items they could find to wipe their asses with were flags they'd use them, wouldn't they? Talk about desecration . . . I'm rambling. Anyway, how do you feel about this topic, Dave? (Oh, I feel I must say to prevent tons of hate mail in case you print this that I don't go around burning American flags but I accept the fact that some people aren't happy with some decisions the government makes and might express their discontent in this way. I'm not saying everyone has to like it, but everyone should be grown up enough to live with it.)

Well, you certainly lulled me into a false sense of security, that it was oh so easy to hide from the Cirinists, but that sense was shattered into splinters the same instant as the pub door. Oh, I never realized that 'Pud Withers' ("Oh, I wet 'em") was foreshadowing the character's fate. You know, a few more issues and I might have forgiven him. Also, ever since 'Jaka's Story' started I figured the 'Mystery Achievement' would be Rick getting a job. Not anymore. Gee, make me feel stupid, Dave.

I think that's all — no, wait. Back during 'Walking On the Moon', our dear Judge George foretold the end of the world, as well as the rest of Cerebus' life. But I noticed he couldn't predict who was going to complete the Final Ascension, because when Cerebus arrived George told him he had hoped Weisshaupt would make it! So who is George to predict, and who is he to judge?

Well, that's definitely it for this time So, until next time, I don't know, plant some trees or something. And say 'hello' to Gerhard.

Sincerely,

Brad Beaudet
52 Central St.
Franklin, NH
USA 03235

P.S. Morrissey mentioned in the letters page! My nipples explode with delight!

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Don't anybody move to L.A. okay? It's crowded enough as it is, and I like it so I'm staying there.

You know, when I saw that you had switched from quoting Oscar Wilde to quoting Mitch Williams on your back cover of 131, I immediately thought of when I stopped using the Lou Gherig stamps and began using the Ernest Hemingway stamps the Post Office gave me last time. Now I've run out of both. But there was just something about the switch from a literary figure to a baseball player that made me think and wonder about exactly what the nature of stamps (and quotes) are. Wanna know what I came up with? Nada. A big zero.

Hey, Dave? Uh, why does everybody think that by asking you questions about their love-lives that you'll give them some sort of answer that'll be somehow superior to the answer they might get from a professional, or a close personal friend, or, say, *me* for example? I mean, come on! Your talent and professional training is obviously not in the realm of other people's stupid problems, love-life or otherwise. Otherwise, you might have said something about *my* case when I wrote you last time.

My fucking asshole *roommate* from last year who is now my goddamned fucking asshole *suitemate* just asked me "When do I get credit for turning you on to *Cerebus*?" Okay? Now. Great. Now he just said, "I'm a really nice guy." Bastard thinks I'm a big celebrity now that I've gotten a letter from you. Now he says, "That's ridiculous." Go the fuck away, Damian.

All right. Story is, last year (he has the complete collection) he made me read a bunch of *Cerebi* and then I read them all, and then I kept reading them as he kept buying them (fool). So basically that means that I have to wait the whole goddamned summer to read *Cerebus* because I'm too fucking stingy to shell out the bucks for a copy for myself. I suppose I'll buy the ones which have my letters in them, though, just for posterity.

Oh, by the way, the girl across the Atlantic? She's back together with her boyfriend, now she knows that I want her, and now I'm basically forgetting her. Girl I wanted to go out with tonight, though is cuter, but she's fucking got the flu, so I don't know if I'm getting anywhere with *her* (Just thought I'd keep you posted, since the *Cerebus* community seems *so* concerned with everyone's love-life.)

Hey! What the fuck! Jaka's in prison? I mean, last issue I thought it was funny, but I didn't think we'd actually have to see her *in prison*. That was so *sad*. And just when I was getting really interested in the story of Jaka's past, you stopped putting so much in. Just a two page spread? Hell.

This letter is too fucking long! (Think I used the word a *little* too much.)

Brent Daniel
15530 Hamner Dr
Los Angeles, CA
USA 90077

★★★★★★★★★★

Hey Dave,

My husband John & I were on our way home from the comic shop with issue #131 when he made what he thought was a brilliant observation:

"Hey, maybe the fat chick with the crossbow is Jaka's nurse! She *was* a feminist, and we've never seen her face . ."

Then I *read* #131.

I wish he'd kept his mouth shut

See ya,

Laurie Seubert
83 Central Street Warwick, RI
USA 02886-1205

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Every now and then, I meet somebody who tells me that they collect comics. I say "Oh really? Me too," and I ask him (it's usually a him) what titles he collects. He invariably says something to the effect of "I get the X-Men, New Mutants, blah, blah, blah how about you?" and then I tell him that I buy Cerebus and Love & Rockets and similar style comics and he invariably looks at me like I'm from another planet, which is not surprising since I gave him the same look a moment earlier It tends to pretty much kill the subject permanently.

Nice planet you've got here, Dave. Keep up the good work.

More or less sincerely,

John B. Russell
P.O. Box 10053
State College, PA

P.S. This is my first ever fanboy letter. Aren't you thrilled?

P.P.S. A few questions: Is it necessary to write 1990 as MCMXC or can you simplify it to MXM? If the U.S. Flag appears on certain 25-cent postage stamps, does that mean that it is illegal to destroy those envelopes? Is your readership really polarized between extreme weirdness and excessive analysis, or are those just the letters you print? And how's Gerhard?

P P.P.S. I hope you made it through both substance and emotional withdrawals okay. Chin up, Dave.

★★★★★★★★★★

GEE:

A minute ago I was mentioning how that bike-ride-around-the-block had zapped my stonedness away, but two cheese and hot pepper-toasted-bagel halves seem to have cured that unfortunate situation. I just had an idea - it's not the that does it, rather it's the mesmerizing effect of the myriad-of-little bubbles popping at-the-water's-surface sound. Oh, wait, hold on, Dave, I think I hear

my God calling-me-for supper . . . Wow, that was filling. I think my dog's on fire - gotta run.

Olaf Nelson
Washington

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

If you can ignore the hypnotic phallic symbol in the center of the postcard and look towards the bottom, you'll see South Hall. It's a gorgeous building Dave, one I think you'd appreciate and if you're ever in Berkeley, you should check it out.

But to the point: reading the letters page in Cerebus 131 I notice that your readers have a penchant for mentioning bands: Sonic Youth, the Clash, Fugazi, REM, Elvis Costello, Pogues, Jane's Addiction, etc. 5 out of the first 7 and 6 out of the total 16 letters drop band names, sometimes more than one. I'd enclose some graphs and charts if I had space What is going on here, Dave?

Harry Hahn
Berkeley, CA

★★★★★★★★★★

Obliged to! Why! I feel that I am, that is all. Bulwer-Lytton's *Pompeii*, the blind flower girl - singing. The condescending boys, replendescent in perfume, rich, carefree, their pampered assholes longing to be stretched once again by that special pillar of the Empire - normally in the aloof sphere of cultured convention (so distant so admirable). Which reminds me of those 15-year-old girls wearing short black mini-skirts, awed by their power-YES-power over these "superiors". older men. No, I watch them anyway, sex-hypnotism binds me even though I know their shallow game, I'm game. I warn you - no I wouldn't dare who cares. Gimme - women get those gammy guys great god yes. Wondrous how it works out, that. Need it not, not I. One more, one less for the slaughterhousen - one does what one can

Letter-soma: Your book it is now firmly in the *Grummet* stage. Yes yes the chips have been laid down. Nice, just nice how you tied in the prose-slash-still pieces of young Jaka as a background and a contrast (to jail certainly). I'd be a little disappointed if that is all it is, tho. Well now I know I cannot predict all the twisty plot futures, but you know with your "tip of the iceberg/give'em just a whisper" style you will have to expect that enormous appetites, nay, *cravings* will be whetted. Ha, and don't you dare resort to artsy - fartsy - isms (ie. sawdust chocolate mousse to continue the conceit-aphor) justified, perhaps, by a stomach already stuffed with gratuitous praise. Hence I criticize you - oops. I've said too much oh well hell and damnation.

Well I appreciate your fast pace because I am childishly impatient. Also, must say am gratified no more of that back cover culled from that "Oscar Wilde tells it like it is": aphorism list. A little heavy handed, hmm? Although must confess I don't know who Mitch Williams is, and I keep thinking "pitch" is actually referring to tar-like substance (black black pitchy).

Well, I feel better now. As I am! (Hee hee) (or wuz).

A. Painter Harris
(neglecting to sign)

P.S. Maybe, for your next Verwissung - Cerebus, bitter and bilious, enters his bomb-spinning, froth frothing Kropotkin-Pisarev stage? He'd be a dashing Petersburg Nihilist

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Hello. I made love to this woman in a church. It was premarital It was fun I'm not religious or anything The Priest? Blessing holy water or something. Will I go to hell? I think not. I think God might have found it amusing. If Jesus were alive today he wouldn't go to church. No. He'd be chained to the wall of some torture cell in Washington D.C being whipped by the C.I.A. Washington, DC. is rape capital of the world. Rape women. Rape the Earth. The C.I.A. is a wicked band of mother fuckers. I know what I'm talking about. I read Brought to Light. Cerebus raped Astoria. Cerebus is going to have to learn to deal with all his rude urges. Threw a baby off the steps. Someday Gerhard might have a baby and he won't let you hold it. The girl in the church might have a baby. No protection That was stupid, I know. I cried at the end of Church and State 1. Felt pretty empty. Then I read Church and State 2. When Cerebus blew that fucking stone giant to pieces and said, "Damn right!" I jumped and laughed and cheered. I was dizzy. I like Jaka's story tremendously. If that girl has my baby I'll make all work mandatory reading or I'll disown him/her/fetus. Let me tell you that you're just below Jim Morrison and William Blake in my hierarchy of heroes. What do you think of nothing? The girl looks a little like Jaka? I don't look like anybody in your epic. I'm composing an epic of my own. Watch out for me. No kidding.

Blah Blah Sincerely,

Josh Meissner

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Well, I was very pleasantly surprised to get a personal reply from you. Thanks a lot. You've been extraordinarily productive lately in more ways than one, and on a very high plane. When Jaka's Story began the thought foremost in my mind was "when are the Cirinists going to show their ugly faces?", a thought which stayed with me for the first six or so issues, but saints preserve us if you didn't put me right to sleep. I forgot about them completely. When they finally did bust in, I was in shock, partly because I had been made suddenly aware of the presence and vicious persecution of the Cirinists, and partly because I had forgotten to expect them. I said to my friend "I should have been expecting it all along." It was masterful, Dave. It just keeps getting better.

I have some theories. 1) Cirin is one of the other two aardvarks and is also Cerebus' mother. He was separated from her at birth to be raised in the north, probably primarily by the woman in the dream sequence ("how many times do your father and I have to tell you no one wants to look at those ears put y'damn hat on"). 2) Cerebus dies "alone, unmourned, and unloved" because everyone else within a thousand miles of him is dead already, drowned in an "oh no not this again". Also, has anyone else been wondering how the guy on the moon got on the moon in the first place?

Don't you feel like you have to give a personal reply every time (but, then, you probably don't think that, do you?). I haven't run into very many Deadhead Cerebus fans (other than my housemate), but then, I'm not your average Deadhead. Who is? They've been playing for 25 years now. I've been everywhere to see them. Eugene Chadbourne does a song called "I've Been Everywhere" and I like it alot. Some folks could be described as "anti-Deadheads", but even more folks could probably be described as "anti-fun". My my we do have a lot of problems on this world of ours, don't we? Living well is the best revenge. Caring for the planet in all of its diversity is our duty.

Yours asymmetrically,

Stan the Bat

★★★★★★★★★★

Masters Dave & Gerhard -

It has been quite a while since my last letter and I am truly sorry.

Everyone misses your profane/profound presence in AARDVARK COMMENT.

You and GER make a great team, albeit a small one

Most people hate one sentence paragraphs but I think you are different, DAVE; you seem to have super-human understanding and compassion.

DAVE, a friend and I were travelling north and we happened upon a little

store that had a couple of old Cerebus issues. He bought #2 for a ridiculously low price, forcing me to settle for a #9 (no disrespect intended, DAVE). Two days after we returned (by travelling south) I located the ever elusive Cerebus #1!!! Geez, DAVE. I paid an awful lot of money for a magazine. I mean, even if it does contain the essences of two men's souls, was it really worth it? Then I read it. I was so impressed I am looking for another #1 so I can read it again.

Anyway, thanks for being there/here to relieve the horrid pressure of battling conformists, book burners, record banners, and all sorts of nasty nasty creatures.

By the way, I'm still infatuated with that witch, CASSANDRA.

Viva Cerebus -

Steven SCARAB Brady
TRIAD CHAIRMAN
910 Woodvale Dr.
Dixon, CA
USA 95620

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I foolishly started re-reading *Church & State* with a big essay due in days which I hadn't even started. The essay was on creationism, so it synched up nicely with the big climax of Church and State. Then I was listening to a Jellyfishbabies tape and when it was over I put on the radio and the second last song I'd heard was on

I like it when that stuff happens.

Not when I hear the last 5 seconds of a Bonnie Raitt song twice before 9 a.m. but that's another story

So *Church & State* was incredible again, even though the cover's come right off. *Jaka's Story* continues to amaze me. I really admire the relationships you develop between the characters and the way your people really act like people.

Umm . . . Gerhard must have a deep love for the line

My thoughts keep driftin' off here and I can't afford to have that kind of thing happening when I have 500 years of art history to learn in 6 days. I guess that's it, except that my friend tells me that Ernie is Bert's nephew.

Jason Turner
199 Westwood Rd., #75
Guelph, Ontario
N1H 7S1

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Thanks for the reply - writing to you from the Science Fiction Bookshop - Edinburgh - Scotland - UK Wanted to tell your Cerebus readers that from now on they can send their personal problem letters to me, Auntie Arlene instead of cloggin up your Comment Columns with the drivel of she loves me, she loves me not. Know what I mean?

Thanks again.

Arlene
46 Hermes Rd.,
Maxwell Park,
Glasgow G41 4AH

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

When I woke up this morning my bed was underneath me and the ceiling was over my head. Gravity is a serious subject!

Dear Dave,

My girlfriend just left me. It seems that she wasn't really human after all She was a lesbian Vulcan, living on earth in denial of an industrial accident she suffered as a child, leaving her with half ears, but boy, could the little woman cook.

Dear Dave,

My head just exploded What a mess, and the maid is off today.

Dear Dave,

I . . .

Wait a minute. Sim? No, not Sim

I mean David Chennette, in reference to his letter in issue 132. You know, the one where he complains about the asinine letters which keep appearing in Aardvark Comment.

Let me see if I have got this straight, this guy is upset because people are writing stupid childish letters to a comic book? Okay, maybe not upset, but at least a tad bit irked.

Maybe there are more than a half a-dozen or so willing and competent enough among the twenty-five thousand of us to write intelligent letters for this little forum, but, more than likely we are busy going to school or working one productive job or another, and upon coming home at the end of the day of acting and being competent and mature don't really mind a little moronic behaviour. To top all that off, some guy in Kitchener will actually print almost any babbling nonsense we see fit to send. Somehow I don't think we're all that eager to give that up.

So we don't want to engage ourselves in deep and philosophical discussions about all the symbolic meaning there is in an aardvark life Does that mean we don't understand or enjoy the book? I don't think that twenty-five thousand people would consistently buy the book if they weren't getting it (twenty four thousand five hundred and twelve maybe, but not twenty-five thousand). We just can't be dashing off eloquent disertations on the subject every thirty days or so.

So please don't be too dismayed if there are some people out there who enjoy reading (and on occasion even writing) a few letters that seem to be, well, sort of senseless. I for one would be very upset if all of a sudden there were no more bizarre, but funny (in a strange sort of way) letters to read

I can appreciate a good letter though, and would hate to see a complete lack of well written, well thought out ideas discussing Cerebus, Jaka and or any subject, for that matter I would feel as if I am losing some private in-joke, that all of us were in on (all twenty-five thousand of us), if we didn't get our regular stupid-mail part of the book though.

An otherwise humourous two or three pages might begin to become dry or boring after a while. I would hate to lose either type of letters from the letters page, and while the decision is ultimately that of Mr Sim, I for one would appreciate a well-balanced letters page, as opposed to one that just gets silly once in a while, instead of on a regular basis

I appreciate the opportunity to be heard and would like to apologize to Mr. Sim for using pen, but the sharpener in my CRAYOLA 64 pack is busted. I think its a commie plot (a lot of what used to be neat household items are mysteriously breaking since that nutty wall-thing came down). Otherwise I think burnt-umber or Indian red would have been nice choices for this letter.

Brian Hurley
1 Coach Dr.
Hazlet, NJ
USA 07730

P.S. While we are on the subject of symbolism in the book, do the bars on the windows of the doors, behind which Jaka is standing symbolize the fact that she is in jail, or am I digging too deep here?

★★★★★★★★★★

Sir,

I do not exist.

(If the author of these words does not exist, then the words themselves do not exist, if the words themselves do not exist then the reader of these words does not exist. It is necessary, of course, for the reader to renounce the preceding hypothesis and declare it to be both fallacious and absurd, for if the hypothesis were to be accepted the reader would thereby have to accept his or her own nonexistence.)

A thesis similar to the foregoing

sophistry was once promulgated by the lugubrious German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer ("Artie" to his friends - of whom he had none), a thesis in which he, himself (like I, myself), did not believe, for if he had believed in it he would not have found it necessary to inform his illusions of their own nonexistence.

The Jewish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer has noted, "We've got to believe in free-will. We've got no choice." As a corollary to this I should like to draw your attention to an improvised short story of Wilde's dealing with the selfsame theme which I believe appears in Hesketh Pearson's "Life" but which is also reproduced in Jorge Luis Borges & Adolfo Bioy Casares' mystical and mythical collection of "Extraordinary Tales". Two briefer anecdotes from the afore-mentioned anthology I hereby submit:

"It is well known that all ogres live in Ceylon and that all their beings are contained in a single lemon. A blind man slices the lemon and all the ogres die".

"Kardan felt ill. His uncle asked him

"What would you like to eat?"

"The head of two lambs."

"There isn't any."

"In that case, the two heads of a lamb."

"There aren't any."

"Then I don't want anything.""

As a final thought: "The ultimate love I believe to be secret love. Once shared, love shrinks in stature. To pine away for love all one's years, to die of love without uttering the beloved's name, this is the true meaning of love." - Jocho Yamamoto (1659-1719).

It is a pity more of your readers wouldn't stop all their whining and heed this pertinent advice.

Yours Insincerely,

Hazel Motes (Mr.)
3 Medlar Street
Camberwell
London SE5 0JU
England

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

It's Jay again. I *really* and *truly* feel I need a personal answer Sorry, I wasn't amazingly fulfilled at receiving an autographed form letter that *you have touched*, "however briefly". (It is my third, the second was a rejection in response to a single page that you forgot to sign!)

That is not the issue at hand, though.

A close friend has died, and I'm on the edge of my seat because I can't get issue 131. Because I've just moved to Washington recently, and there is only *one* store in the immediate area, and they only carry 1 or 2 issues of the only comic book worthy of my time! So I'll be forced to wait 1 month for it to be back-stocked to find out *what* the mystery achievement is, *whether* Fred is safe or not, and to see Pud Withers buried six feet under. Give him a decent burial, Dave. Even though I miss him terribly, and have had to get on with my life, a friend shed insight towards the matter, so I cope. His name is Jeff Stoneking, he had a letter in Aardvark Comment of 130, his letter sounded interesting, so I wrote him and we are now partial pen-pals. But he can tell you his Dave-kills-Pud theory if you're that interested.

Dave, allow me to digress for a moment I know Jaka's Story was (is) written, intended for everyone who had that 'Jaka' of their own in their life? Can I tell you briefly about mine? Her last name is Nash, she's 18, "long of limb and excruciatingly slender", built, long, straight hair; blue eyes; I mean, Dave, the resemblance is striking! Not only appearance, but she is soft-spoken, sensitive, intelligent, and tender as well Aargh!

She loved *me*, I didn't realize what I had, and left her behind when I moved to Olympia from San Jose, California.

Oh, never mind, scratch all that.

So Dave, will you hint to me the importance and significance of Withers' demise? And what the future holds in store for Cerebus? (The character, as well as the book). Where are you working now? I know you were given the boot from your studio or something; whatever. How's the Delta 9-tetmhydrocannabinal withdrawal going?

I was never completely partial to it, the euphoria was cancelled out by the muddled thought and lethargy LSD was always my drug of choice, but then why am I telling you that? Good luck quitting all the same.

I guess that is all,

Just me,

Jay Attaway
5946 St Charles Dr NE
Olympia, WA
USA 98506

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Cerebus,

I like your work very very very very much. At first I thought this comic about some scruff was a tad bit interesting but it developed very very very wonderfully and now it's really really interesting as opposed to a tad bit interesting.

Your character Dave is pretty interesting and Gerhard is pretty interesting too.

When are you going to write more dialogue for Gerhard?

Enough from me, Cerebus, how are you doing?

So sincere it makes my own brain hemorrhage,

KeeKoo
67-54 Groton Street
Forest Hills, NY
USA 11375

P.S. Dave looked alot more interesting when he looked scruffier. Howzabout you giving his scruffy characteristics back?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

1) A parachute.
2) He was a dwarf.
3) Through the hole where the door was.
4) Triplets.
5) The bottom rung.
6) His mother, the politician.

How did you do?

Yours ever,

Martin McDónagh
3 Medlar St.
London SES 0JU
England

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Cerebus is my favourite comic, but I'm getting worried. It's the letters page. Everyone writing in seems to have just broken up with their girlfriend or some such I've been happily going out with someone for about four years now, and I think there must be a connection between reading Cerebus and breaking up with one's girlfriend. Could it be something in the ink? Should I wear gloves when I read Cerebus? Should I quit reading the regular issues for a few years and catch up with the Reprints?

I'm counting on your expert advice to help with this dilemma. If you can't solve this problem, I'll have to write to Ann Landers.

Yours Interrogatively,

Lee Sunderlin

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Justice Leaguers -

I just wanted to tell you guys that Big Bird is more fun to look at than Blue Beetle. I think you should take him, and . . um . . .

Oops . . .

Sorry, Dave. Wrong letter . . .

Your mag is cool, Dave. Real cool. I know that such a proclamation by someone living in the Bible Belt doesn't mean much, but what the hell At least I

don't live in Chicago.

Did you ever notice that you're not supposed to capitalize "hell", even though you do capitalize places like "Chicago"? Weird, huh? I imagine there are even more people in hell than in Chicago. In fact, many of the people in hell probably came from . . . well . . . never mind.

You got yourself a real good setup here, Dave, m'boy! Where else can Cassandra the Witch and Mark the Thai-Boxing Necromancer have a forum to spill their various and underrated wisdoms? Time magazine? I doubt it. Over at DC? Probably not, even though they could possibly get Blue Beetle to say "yes, indeedy" (don't give in to Mark and Cassandra about that, Dave - you gotta have values . . .). I guess they figured any lettercol that would print a picture of Connie Lingus playing "hide the salami" would be the ideal medium for free expression.

I would touch on the masturbation thing (if you'll pardon the imagery), but I've already got enough hair on my palms and my spine is curved for too much as it is. What about Mark's question about what was going through God's mind when he invented pubic hair? Well, I think that God meant it as a universal equilizer - you know you're sharing something with just about everyone else on the planet. The pope has pubic hair, I guess. Cher definitely has it. Roseanne Barr, Henry Kissinger, Debbie Gibson, Margaret Thatcher and Carl Sagan. The New Kids on the Block might not have it, but they can't escape puberty forever. Even Tammy Faye Bakker has it. If that doesn't make you want to never be naked again, nothing will.

I've read that some girls shave their pubic hair. Don't know why. I guess pubic stubble appeals to some people. I'd sure hate to be around when they put the aftershave on. What about it, Tracy? Cassandra? Any insights?

Ok, Dave - what about this Jaka In-Prison shit? I mean, it's cool and all, and I like the way it's written, but . . . well, I dunno . . . it would be an easy way out for Rick to have been killed and then Jaka and Fred can get back together. Or, you can kill off Jaka, and have Cerebus go on a mad killing-spree, but that would look too much like what all the Batfreaks wanted when Robin bought it. I'll bet Pud was kinda wishing he'd made his move on ol' Jaka when he caught that crossbow bolt with his rib cage, wasn't he?

I would have been

What's Bud Plant up to these days, Dave? I'll bet you didn't get a Christmas card from him last year, did you? It's okay - he didn't get one from me. (Nor did you, come to think of it. Sorry 'bout that, Dave, - what did finally happen with good ol' Bud? And what about Diamond? You probably told us, and I just forgot. If it'll help, I won't send any of 'em a Christmas card this year, either. If anyone wants the card I was going to send to Bud Plant, let me know, and it's yours.)

On second thought, scratch the "kill off Jaka" idea. You'd have to be a real low-watt bulb to make all that background stuff, and then zap her. If that's what you're going to do, though, forget I said anything.

Can you get Lord Julius to say "bitchin'"? How 'bout The WhateverRoach saying "hooters"? No? Well, no Christmas card for you this time around, then. Anyone want Dave's Christmas card?

Well, that's it from me for now, Dave! Your book is more fun than my last two girlfriends put together - not that I put them together very much or anything. That would have been one BIG girl. Take care, and never let 'em see ya sweat!

Christian Walters
222 Tichenor Avenue Apt. #11
Auburn, AL
USA 36830

P.S. I was kidding about not sending you a Christmas card. I'll send one if you like. I can get them real cheap these days.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I know this is a little late, but I found something that was out of the ordinary in Cerebus #77. On page 16, Cerebus is walking to the bathroom. Then on the bottom his head and arms are gone. If this is a mistake I was wondering if you could please autograph this copy.

I also think it is kind of dumb to waste a few whole pages of Cerebus taking a leak and choking his chicken. I mean some perverts might find this interesting and funfilled but I think it's a waste of paper.

This was the first Cerebus I didn't enjoy and hopefully the last.

Solgy
52 Oakview Dr. RD6
Pleasantville, NJ
USA 08232

★★★★★★★★★★

Yo, Dave!

I was at this little birthday party with a couple of friends when one of the presents turned out to be a pack of "New Kids on the Block" trading cards. As everyone hated the bastards from Boston, we thought of what we could do with them. Digging out my lighter, I suggested we burn their disgusting little efigys. (that is how you spell efigy isn't it?) We then headed outside to procede with our ritual. Guess what Dave, I held my bloody lighter under them for two minutes and nothing happened. The bastards were fire proofed! Two minutes and only a little black soot on their cutesy little faces. I was pissed! What's the world coming to Dave? Undaunted and armed with a pack of Black Cats (thems firecrackers, Dave), I was determined to blow them up. I taped the fire crackers to the card, lit it, and threw it. A satisfying explosion soon followed. No damage done, none. The New Kids on the Block trading cards are indestructable; this *proves* they're the Anti-Christ.

Ever read Groo the Wanderer, a very funny creator owned barbarian comic by Sergio Aragones? Real cool stuff Dave!

Yours till 299 (I like being in suspense).

Casey C. Bowser
Box 564
Brunswick, ME
USA 04011

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Well, first off I'd like to apologize for my last letter . . . it was written by my evil twin, James "Bart" Ghool. Also it was written at some godawful hour of the morning, so it's my own self I should be apologizing to. Perhaps I shouldn't end a sentence with a preposition.

So, I'm sitting here listening to some Yello, and I've just read #131, and I'm damn impressed. Oops, not listening to Yello anymore, "Flesh" by A Split-Second was the next thing on this particular mixtape. Where was I? Oh yes, #131. Well, let's just say that reading things in books has made my jaw physically drop about four times, and this was one of them. The others? Um . . . I know the jaw dropped once while I read *The Illearth War* back in the old days. Can't think of any others just now.

I still haven't done my research paper, by the way. Fuck it, I'll do it tomorrow. I'm sick of this place right now, and it's affecting my work. Here's a tip, Dave: NEVER go to Knoxville. It's a cesspool. Or at least, the areas surrounding the University are cesspools. But most people, especially in east Tennessee, cling like rats to the idea of getting drunk, being loud, and puking all over the place. I know this because of several incidents. The most recent occurred (are there two R's in "occurred"? I should know that) last night. I was heading back to my room after hanging around with the film committee, with a friend of mine and a rented copy of *Eraserhead*. Some drunk sororwhore leaned out of a pickup truck — a PICKUP TRUCK — and shouted "Are you gay? Cos you act like it!"

Now, I'm not gay. And to the best of my knowledge the only way to ACT gay is to physically go for a member of the same sex. Of course, if this person had been standing in front of me and said that, I would have shrugged it off. As it is, the remark didn't hurt, but it brought home a truth about this area that I'd been trying to deny.

The song now, by the way is "Down in it" by Nine Inch Nails. Next up is "Peek-a-boo" followed by "Song for a Future Generation".

Back to the point, which is this. Knoxville, or to be more specific the areas surrounding the University, is a collective series of cesspools. I keep using the word, but it fits better than anything else. East Tennessee is, for a start the most sexually insecure place I have ever had the misfortune to inhabit. And I'm talking about REAL sexual security here, man. Not one-night fucks, not orgies, not rampant masturbation. Sexual security is mental. What it means is that a guy doesn't have to prove his manhood by fucking some empty headed sororwhore. What it means is that frat-holes ganging up on and beating up people who have the temerity to not DRESS the way they do is not a good thing. What it means is you can see who you want to, and they can see you and others whom they want to (badly constructed sentence).

The song is "Garlands" by Cocteau Twins.

Sexual freedom will never come while men and women feel they must revert to the roles of MACHO and SEX KITTEN. To get laid is not, for men a SCORE. It is not, for women, a DEGRADATION. It's an act. It's something you do with someone you love, or at least like. Damn it, why can't these assholes figure it out? It's a SIMPLE concept!

Anyway. Don't feel that these remarks are caused by affiliation with some group or other. I'm not a feminist, and I'm not a masculinist (yes, the word is "Masculinist," ladies, not "Chauvinist". Women can be chauvinists just as well as men). I'm, I guess, a humanist. What else can you call it? Anthropist. That could be miscontrued as masculinism, though, because "Anthro" means both men in gender and humans in general. It's the "humans in general" bit that applies here.

Anyway. Sorry to have rambled on for so long about a subject not really relevent to Cerebus (which is shaping up nicely) or *Jaka's Story*. I did like the first issue of "Mystery Achievement". The art looks a lot different, maybe because there aren't many backgrounds for Gerhard to work out on. Not that I don't like backgrounds; I love 'em. It just makes for a more interesting juxtaposition between the books.

#131 was great. Waiting anxiously for Nurse's attempt on Jaka's life. I do hope you don't do what I hope you're not going to do, which is having Cerebus come in with Elrod and a Roach and bust Jaka out of jail.

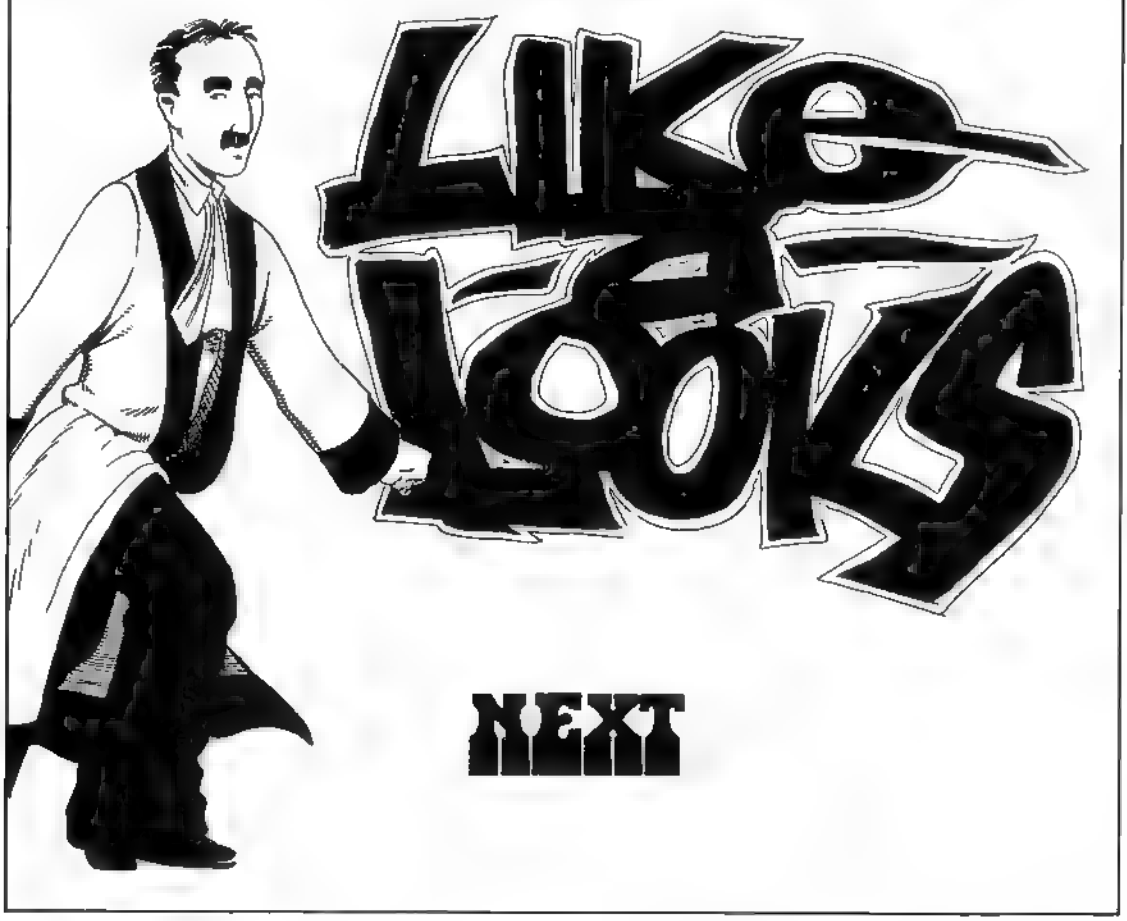
I suspect that Jaka will be meeting Cirin. The only question is, will she get to tell Cerebus about Cirin or will she be executed? I gotta know, man. Good thing there's less than five months till I find out.

Anyway, good day.

Neil Dorsett
1910 Caledonia, Box 304D
Knoxville, TN
USA 37916

P.S. As long as Aardvark Comment can be used to promote our favorite bands, I'll throw in suggestions of my own. Front 242, Meat Beat Manifesto, A Split-Second, and of course, MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT. Good day.

★★★★★★★★★★



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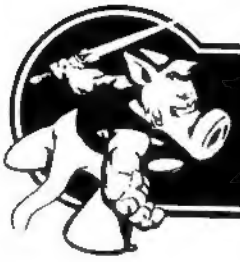

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